

REMARKS

Applicants have considered the outstanding official action. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are directed to patentable subject matter as set forth below.

Initially, the Examiner stated that the Declaration is considered defective because:

a. It does not correctly identify the foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate on which priority is claimed pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.55, and any foreign application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed, by specifying the application number, country, day, month and year of its filing; and

b. The full name of each inventor (family name and at least one given name together with any initial) has not been set forth (see MPEP §605.04(b)).

Initially, applicants submit that the foreign priority data is correct as set forth on the Declaration as filed and the Application Data Sheet submitted at the time of filing. Priority of the PCT/International Application No. PCT/GB00/03234 filed August 21, 2000 is being claimed under 35 U.S.C. §365(a) which states -

"(a) In accordance with the conditions and requirements of subsections (a) through (d) of section 119 of this title, a national application shall be entitled to the right of priority based on a prior filed international application which designated at least one country other than the United States."

Further, 37 CFR §1.55(a)(1)(ii) states -

"In an application that entered the national stage from an international application after compliance with 35 U.S.C. §371, the claim for priority must be made during pendency of the application and within the time limit set forth in the PCT and the Regulations under PCT."

The claim for priority as set forth at the bottom of page 1 of the original Declaration and the Application Data Sheet filed August 7, 2002, therefore, are proper.

In view, however, of the submission of a supplemental Declaration due to the other objection to the Declaration and since priority was also properly claimed in the Application Data Sheet, applicants are submitting herewith a supplemental Declaration not identifying the PCT application in the claim for foreign priority to conform to the Examiner's requirement and to move the case forward, or, in the event the Examiner reverses his position in view of the above, the applicants rely on the claim for priority in the Application Data Sheet.

As to the second objection to the Declaration, the supplemental Declaration submitted herewith identifies each

5648/PCT/USSN 10/049,860
Group Art Unit 1754

inventor by family name and at least one given name as required. A Supplemental Application Data Sheet is also attached identifying the inventors by family name and at least one given name.

Accordingly, the objections to the Declaration have been overcome. Withdrawal of the objections is requested.

Additionally, applicants are filing concurrently herewith a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.182 requesting that the executed Declaration having the corrected name of the inventor "Andrew Philip Jeapes" be accepted. A copy of the Petition is attached for the convenience of the Examiner. Applicants are submitting with the Petition a Declaration of Andrew Philip Jeapes declaring that he is the inventor named in the Declaration executed June 10, 2002 and filed August 7, 2002 as well as the executed Declaration filed concurrently herewith; that he is the same inventor as the inventor named in the WIPO Publication WO 01/15175 A2 as "A. J. Jeapes"; and that he presumes that his name as "A. J. Jeapes" on the WIPO Publication was a typographical error. No change in inventorship has occurred, simply an error in the name set forth.

The disclosure is objected to because of minor informalities in the specification and claims, as listed in

paragraph 9 of the official action. Accordingly, the specification and claims have been amended as suggested by the Examiner to overcome the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4-21 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from another multiple dependent claim. Claims 4-21 have been amended to remove the improper multiple dependencies. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, "because the specification, while being enabling for methods for treating a spent ionic liquid composition, which comprises the **specific** ionic liquid, 1-methyl-3-ethylimidazolium chloride, and contaminants, comprising: heating said ionic liquid composition **under reduced pressure at or below 2 mmHg to a temperature ranging from 200°C to 300°C** so as to form a partial decomposition product thereof; separating said product from said contaminants; and reacting the separated product with a reactant to regenerate said ionic liquid; does not reasonably provide enablement for methods for treating a spent ionic liquid composition, which comprises **any** ionic liquid and contaminants, comprising: **generally** heating the

ionic liquid composition so as to form a partial decomposition product thereof; separating said product from said contaminants; and reacting the separated product with a reactant to regenerate said ionic liquid" (original emphasis).

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is enabled by the specification for treating a spent ionic liquid composition which comprises an ionic liquid composition and contaminants. At page 1, lines 4-7, the invention is described as treating spent ionic liquids and that while reference will be made to some liquid used in reprocessing nuclear fuels, that it should be understood that the invention applies in all fields of ionic liquid technology, including outside the nuclear industry. Further, the specification generally discloses an ionic liquid composition for use in the method and names as an example or preferred embodiment of such an ionic liquid composition 1-methyl-3-ethylimidazolium chloride (see the specification at page 3, lines 19 and 24-26). Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation that the heating step is under reduced pressure at or below 2 mmHg at a temperature in a range from 200°C to 300°C. Accordingly, claim 1 is enabled by the specification, in particular as

clarified by the amendment to claim 1. Withdrawal of the §112, first paragraph, rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention as set forth in paragraph 13 of the official action. Applicants respectfully submit that the specification sufficiently discloses that the separating step occurs before the reacting step (see specification page 2, lines 25-28 and page 4, lines 11-24). Additionally, claim 1 has the transition phrase "comprising" which is open-ended and does not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method steps. Claim 1 does not have any specific language which limits the sequence of the separating step and the reacting step. Claim 1 has been amended such that "reacting" has been amended to read "regenerating" to clarify what is being claimed. Applicants submit that claim 1 is definite within the meaning of §112. Withdrawal of the §112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 is further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite as set forth in paragraph 14 of the official action, i.e., that it is dependent on itself. Claim 3 has been amended to correct

5648/PCT/USSN 10/049,860
Group Art Unit 1754

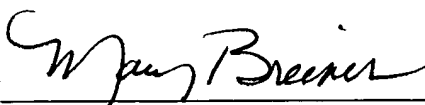
the dependency. Withdrawal of the §112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement that claims 1-3 would be allowable over the prior art if rewritten or amended to overcome all rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs, as set forth in the Office action. Claims 1-3 have been amended to overcome the rejections. Further, claims 4-21 are dependent directly or indirectly on allowable claim 1. Thus, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration and formal allowance of the claims is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

ANDREW PHILIP JEAPES ET AL

By 

Mary J. Breiner, Attorney
Registration No. 33,161
BREINER & BREINER, L.L.C.
115 North Henry Street
P.O. Box 19290
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-0290

Telephone: (703) 684-6885

Attachments - Supplemental Declaration
- Supplemental Application Data Sheet
- Petition Under 37 CFR §1.182 (Copy)